

Feast of Saint Juan Diego  
Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
La Crosse  
December 9, 2017

1 Cor 1, 26-31  
Ps 131, 1. 2. 3  
Mt 11, 25-30

## HOMILY

*Praised be Jesus Christ!*

The Feast of Saint Juan Diego which we celebrate with great joy today invites us to consider personally the words of Saint Paul to the first Christians at Corinth:

Consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.<sup>1</sup>

Saint Paul's inspired words remind us that God is counting upon all of us, no matter how talented or how educated or of what social class we may be, to labor with His only-begotten Son Incarnate, Christ our Lord, in His mission for the salvation of the world. Saint Paul concludes that it is in Jesus Christ that we have life and holiness and that, therefore, when we boast, we boast not of ourselves, but we "boast of the Lord,"<sup>2</sup> of the work of divine grace poured forth into our hearts from His glorious pierced Heart.

Clearly, Juan Diego considered himself to be unworthy of the mission which the Mother of God entrusted into his hands during her apparitions at Tepeyac from December 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> of 1531. After Our Lady had sent him on his first visit to Bishop Juan de Zumárraga, she appeared to him for a second time. He explained to her the Bishop's skeptical reaction to the request which Our Lady had made through him. He declared with some emotion:

The way he answered me I could clearly see that he thinks I may have made it up, about your wanting a little house built for you here, or that it is not

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor 1, 26-29.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor 1, 31.

from you. So I beg you, my Lady, Queen and my little Girl, to send one of the nobles who are held in esteem and respected with the message, so that it will be believed; for I am a man of no importance, a backframe, a follower. You are sending me to a place that I am not used to spending my time, my little Virgin, my youngest Daughter, my Lady. Forgive me if I grieve you and you are angry with me.<sup>3</sup>

Before the challenge of the mission, Juan Diego was always docile and obedient, but, at the same time, he doubted that he could do all that God was asking of him. When the work seemed particularly difficult, he found excuses why the mission should be entrusted to someone else.

But Our Lord Himself teaches us that God reveals His will to the “childlike,”<sup>4</sup> to those who, like Him, are “meek and humble of heart,”<sup>5</sup> to those who recognize that all that they are and have comes from the hand of God and who place all their trust in Him. He assures us that, if doing His will demands much labor and is burdensome, He will “give [us] rest.”<sup>6</sup> Using an image from farming to describe our work with Him for the salvation of the world, he encourages to “take [His] yoke”<sup>7</sup> upon our shoulders. He declares: “For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”<sup>8</sup>

When Juan Diego suggested to Our Lady that he was not the right person for the mission she had entrusted to him, she simply replied that, although many others might be able to carry out the mission and even carry it out more effectively, she was calling upon him to assist her. She said to Juan Diego:

Listen to me, my youngest and dearest son, know for sure that I do not lack servants and messengers to whom I can give the task of carrying out my

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<sup>3</sup> “Bien en ello miré, según me respondió, que piensa que tu casa que quieres que te hagan aquí, tal vez yo nada más lo invento, o que tal vez no es de tu labios; mucho te suplico, Señora mía, Reina, Muchachita mía, que a alguno de los nobles, estimados, que sea conocido, respetado, honrado, le encargues que conduzca, que leve tu amable aliento, tu amable palabra para que crean. Porque en verdad yo soy un hombre de campo, soy mecapal, soy parihuela, soy cola, soy ala; yo mismo necesito ser conducido, llevado a cuestras, no es lugar de mí andar ni de mí detenerme allá a donde me envías. Virgencita mía, Hija mía menor, Señora Niña; Por favor dispénsame: afligiré con pena tu rostro, tu corazón; iré a caer en tu enojo, en tu disgusto, Señora Dueña mía.” *Nican Mopohua (Aquí se cuenta)*, tr. Mario Rojas Sánchez (México, D.F.: Design & Digital Print S.A. de C.V., 2001), pp. 6-7, nn. 53-56. [Nican Mopohua]. English translation: *A Handbook on Guadalupe*, ed. Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate (New Bedford, MA: Our Lady’s Chapel, 1997), pp. 196-197. [Nican Mopohua Eng].

<sup>4</sup> Mt 11, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Mt 11, 29.

<sup>6</sup> Mt 11, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Mt 11, 29.

<sup>8</sup> Mt 11, 30.

words, who will carry out my will. But it is very necessary that you plead my cause and, with your help and through your mediation, that my will be fulfilled.<sup>9</sup>

From the moment of baptism, God indeed has a plan for each of us as co-workers of His Son in His vineyard. It is Our Lady who, with unfailing maternal love, helps us to know God's will and to do it with all our heart. Thus, Pope Saint John Paul II, making reference to the meaning of Juan Diego's name in his native tongue, Nahuatl, prayed at the conclusion of his homily for the Mass of his Canonization:

Beloved Juan Diego, "the talking eagle"! Show us the way that leads to the "Dark Virgin" of Tepeyac, that she may receive us in the depths of her heart, for she is the loving, compassionate Mother who guides us to the true God. Amen.<sup>10</sup>

Today, let us pray, in a particular way, for this shrine dedicated to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother under her title of Our Lady of Guadalupe: that it may always be a holy place in which the Mother of God meets her children on pilgrimage and leads them to her Divine Son, God the Son Incarnate, Who alone is their salvation.

As we rejoice in the memory of Saint Juan Diego, let us ask, through intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe and through his intercession, that we may be able to accomplish ever more perfectly and fully the work which Our Lord entrusts to us for the building up of His Kingdom, for the strengthening of His Mystical Body, the Holy Church. Let us also ask, through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe and of Saint Juan Diego, that we may overcome any temptation to find excuses for not doing God's will in our daily lives.

In a particular way, let us pray for the members of the Saint Juan Diego Guild, those who are already members and those who will be inducted today: children, adolescents and young people who, with Saint Juan Diego, do God's will under the direction and with the help of the

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<sup>9</sup> "Escucha, el más pequeño de mis hijos, ten por cierto que no son escasos mis servidores, mis mensajeros, a quienes encargué que lleven mi aliento, mi palabra, para que efectúen mi voluntad; pero es muy necesario que tú, personalmente vayas, ruegues que por tu intercesión se realice, se lleve a efecto mi querer, mi voluntad." Nican Mopohua, p. 7, nn. 58-59. English translation: Nican Mopohua Eng, p. 197.

<sup>10</sup> "¡Amado Juan Diego, «el águila que habla»! Enséñanos el camino que lleva a la Virgen Morena del Tepeyac, para que Ella nos reciba en lo íntimo de su corazón, pues Ella es la Madre amorosa y compasiva que nos guía hasta el verdadero Dios. Amén." Ioannes Paulus PP. II, Allocutio, VII: Mexicopoli in canonizatione beati Ioannis Didaci," 31 Iulii 2002, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 94 (2002), 745, n. 5. English translation: *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English, 7/14 August 2002, 8.

Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. In a particular way, the Virgin of Guadalupe teaches her faithful messengers, Saint Juan Diego and his contemporary successors, to trust that God's promises to us will be fulfilled, if only we remain His faithful co-workers. Let us recall the words with which Saint Elizabeth praised the Virgin Mother of God at the Visitation: "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."<sup>11</sup> Under the maternal instruction of the Virgin Mary, we, with Saint Juan Diego, are confident that, even when doing God's will means suffering and dying for us, it is truly our way to the eternal salvation which God has promised to His faithful servants. It is the way to joy and peace in this life, and to the fullness of joy and peace in the life to come.

Let us now lift up our hearts, one with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus. Let us "boast of the Lord" Who, through the Eucharistic Sacrifice, pours forth into our hearts from His glorious pierced Heart, the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit. May our hearts rest always in His Eucharistic Heart, filled with confidence that, with the help of His grace, we can accomplish all that God is asking of us, as Saint Juan Diego did so heroically.

*Heart of Jesus, fountain of life and holiness, have mercy on us!  
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America and Star of the New Evangelization, pray for us!  
Saint Juan Diego, pray for us!*

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE

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<sup>11</sup> Lk 1, 45.